



15th January 2015

United Kingdom Slaughter Statistics – December 2014

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Key points

This release shows the latest monthly information on the slaughtering of cattle, sheep and pigs. It also includes dressed carcase weight and meat production information. The key results for **December 2014** are given below:

- **Cattle:** UK prime cattle (steers, heifers and young bulls) slaughterings were 3.4% higher than in December 2013 at 140 thousand head. Beef and veal production was 63 thousand tonnes, 6.6% higher than in December 2013.
- **Sheep:** UK clean sheep slaughterings were 5.5% higher than in December 2013 at 1126 thousand head. Mutton and lamb production was 25 thousand tonnes, 0.9% higher than in December 2013.
- **Pigs:** UK clean pig slaughterings were 4.8% higher than in December 2013 at 796 thousand head. Pigmeat production was 66 thousand tonnes, 6.3% higher than in December 2013.

This notice will be updated at 09:30 on 19th February 2015. Additional time series which include weekly slaughter averages, production and trade data can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cattle-sheep-and-pig-slaughter>

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Section 1: Monthly numbers of home killed livestock slaughtered

Table 1 shows monthly estimates of the number of home killed cattle, sheep and pigs, slaughtered as meat for human consumption in UK abattoirs. The survey is run according to statistical, rather than calendar months, the number of weeks in the statistical month is specified below.

Table 1: United Kingdom monthly numbers of livestock slaughtered thousand head

	December 2013 4 weeks	October 2014 5 weeks	November 2014 4 weeks	December 2014 4weeks	yr on yr % change
Steers	63	109	86	72	14%
Heifers	53	71	62	56	5.2%
Young Bulls	19	21	15	12	-36%
Cows and Adult Bulls	41	68	57	48	15%
Calves ⁽¹⁾	6	14	9	7	21%
Clean Sheep	1068	1555	1167	1126	5.5%
Ewes and Rams	171	200	132	123	-28%
Clean Pigs	759	1030	866	796	4.8%
Sows and Boars	16	24	19	16	-2.6%

(1)The definition of Calves from May 2014 is "Bovines less than 1 year old". Pre-May 2014, the definition was "Bovines weighing less than 165kg". Please see Methodology page for full details.

Section 2: Average dressed carcass weights

Table 2 shows the monthly average dressed carcass weight of livestock slaughtered for meat for human consumption in the United Kingdom.

Table 2: United Kingdom average dressed carcass weights kilogramme

	October 2014	November 2014	December 2014
Steers	361.3	360.6	364.1
Heifers	321.4	320.4	324.5
Young Bulls	339.3	342.7	325.2
Cows and Adult Bulls	311.4	308.3	306.7
Calves ⁽¹⁾	40.5	44.0	39.8
Clean Sheep	19.3	19.4	18.8
Ewes and Rams	25.7	26.7	27.1
Clean Pigs	82.1	82.2	80.6
Sows and Boars	143.8	152.0	145.8

(1)The definition of Calves from May 2014 is "Bovines less than 1 year old". Pre-May 2014, the definition was "Bovines weighing less than 165kg". Please see Methodology page for full details.

Section 3: Monthly volumes of home killed meat production

Table 3 shows the monthly volumes of meat produced in UK abattoirs. Data is shown according to statistical, rather than calendar months, number of weeks in statistical month as specified.

Table 3: United Kingdom monthly volumes of meat production thousand tonnes

	October 2014 5 weeks	November 2014 4 weeks	December 2014 4 weeks
Beef	91	74	63
Mutton and Lamb	35	26	25
Pigmeat	88	74	66

Section 4: Average weekly numbers of home killed livestock slaughtered

Table 4 shows the average weekly slaughter figures for the last thirteen months. The monthly slaughter figures in section one are affected by the number of weeks in the statistical month. To get a clearer measure of trends weekly averages are calculated by dividing the number of livestock slaughtered each month by the number of weeks in the statistical month.

Longer term trends can be seen in Figures 4:1, 4:2 and 4:3, following this table.

Table 4: United Kingdom average weekly numbers of livestock slaughtered thousand head

	2013 2014												
	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Steers	16	17	19	19	19	19	18	17	18	20	22	22	18
Heifers	13	15	15	15	14	14	13	12	12	13	14	15	14
Young Bulls	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	5	5	4	4	3
Cows and Adult Bulls	10	12	12	11	9	10	10	10	11	12	14	14	12
Calves ⁽¹⁾	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2
Clean Sheep	267	211	200	207	221	201	232	255	270	284	311	292	282
Ewes and Rams	43	36	36	33	32	30	33	34	39	38	40	33	31
Clean Pigs	190	188	196	195	187	188	193	194	194	205	206	217	199
Sows and Boars	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4

(1)The definition of Calves from May 2014 is "Bovines less than 1 year old". Pre-May 2014, the definition was "Bovines weighing less than 165kg". Please see Methodology page for full details.

Figure 4:1 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of cattle slaughtered

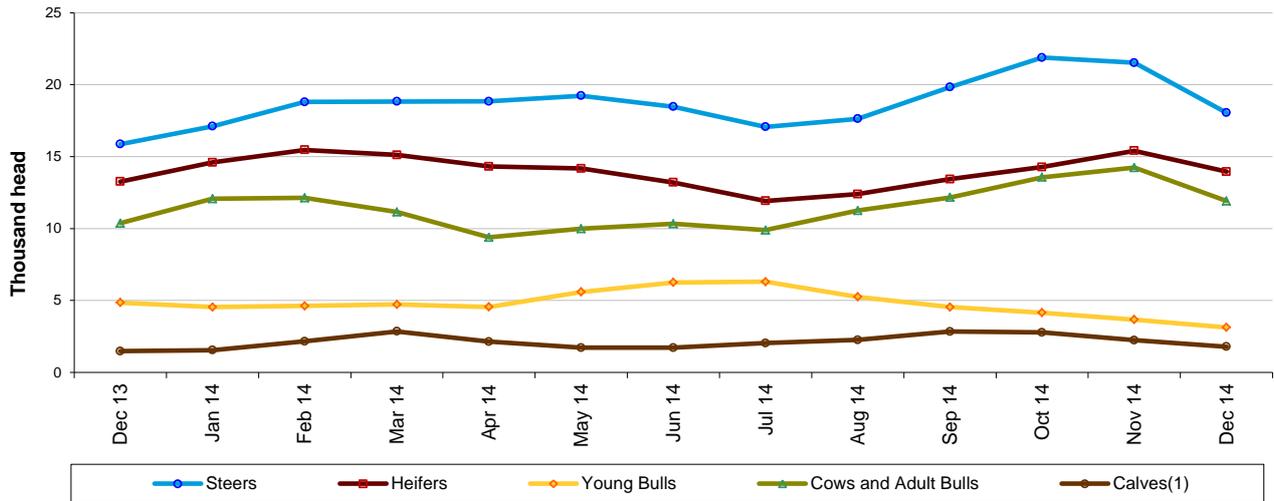


Figure 4:2 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of sheep slaughtered

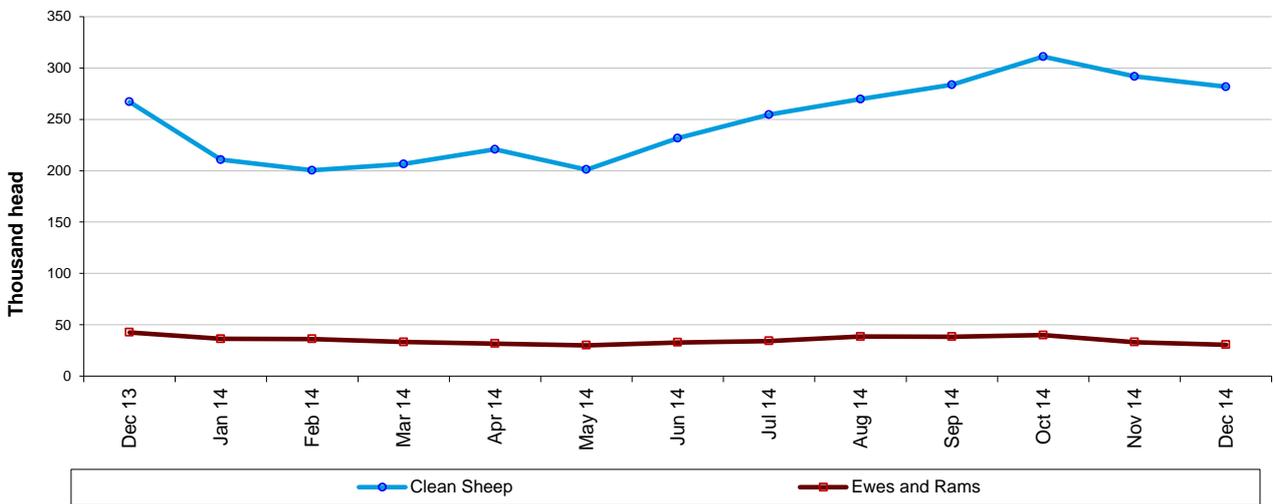
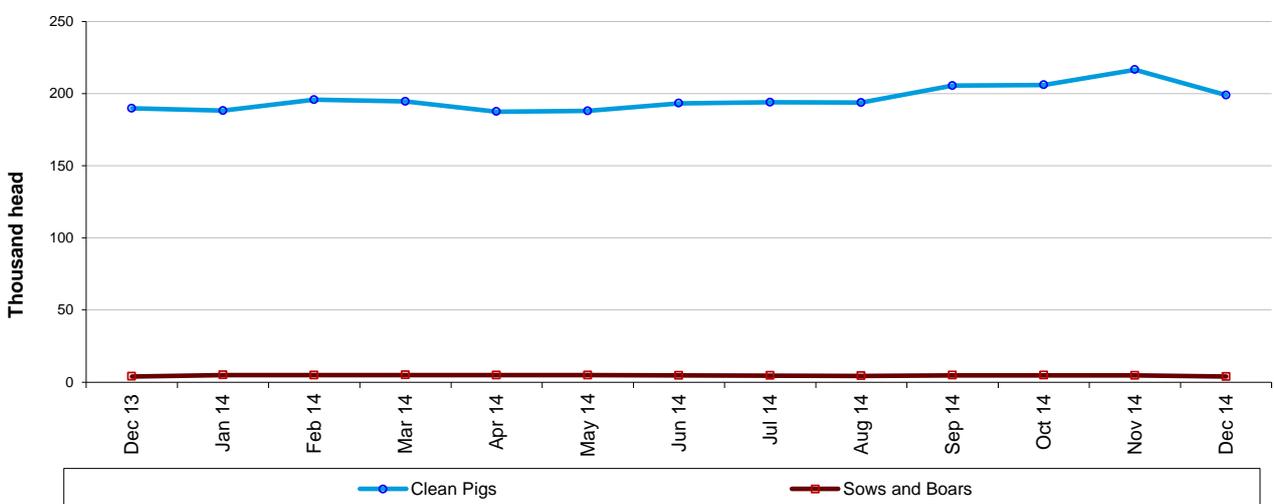


Figure 4:3 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of pigs slaughtered



Section 5: Monthly numbers of home killed livestock slaughtered by country

Table 5 shows monthly estimates of the number of cattle, sheep and pigs slaughtered for meat in England and Wales, Scotland, Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Table 5: United Kingdom monthly numbers of livestock slaughtered by country

	thousand head		
	October 2014	November 2014	December 2014
	5weeks	4weeks	4weeks
England & Wales			
Steers	69	54	45
Heifers	45	37	33
Young Bulls	15	11	9
Cows and Adult Bulls	52	42	37
Calves ⁽¹⁾	13	8	7
Clean Sheep	1348	1011	990
Ewes and Rams	192	126	118
Clean Pigs	840	711	664
Sows and Boars	24	18	15
Scotland			
Steers	20	17	15
Heifers	14	14	13
Young Bulls	4	2	1
Cows and Adult Bulls	6	5	4
Calves ⁽¹⁾	0	0	0
Clean Sheep	152	121	110
Ewes and Rams	3	2	2
Clean Pigs	29	24	22
Sows and Boars	0	0	0
Great Britain			
Steers	90	71	60
Heifers	59	51	46
Young Bulls	19	13	10
Cows and Adult Bulls	58	48	40
Calves ⁽¹⁾	13	8	7
Clean Sheep	1500	1132	1100
Ewes and Rams	194	128	120
Clean Pigs	870	735	686
Sows and Boars	24	19	16
Northern Ireland			
Steers	20	15	12
Heifers	12	11	9
Young Bulls	2	2	2
Cows and Adult Bulls	10	9	7
Calves ⁽¹⁾	1	1	0
Clean Sheep	55	34	27
Ewes and Rams	5	4	3
Clean Pigs	161	131	110
Sows and Boars	0	0	0

Section 6: Data users, methodology, Definitions and revisions policy

Data users

1. Users of the data include the EU Commission where these slaughtering statistics are required monthly under Regulation no. EC.1165/2008. Detailed information on this legislation is available by selecting “Animal Production” at <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/agriculture/legislation>. European level statistics on meat products (which includes data tables showing results at EU Member State level) are available at http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Agricultural_products#Meat_and_milk
2. The livestock industry are also major users of the data, including divisions of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) known as BPEX (representing the English pig industry) and EBLEX (representing the English beef and sheep industry). Industry users rely heavily on the numbers of slaughterings and meat production to assess the current state of the industry and predict the available supplies of meat for the coming year. This, in turn, can affect meat prices and trade decisions on levels of imports and exports to maintain supply. Users have always been very keen for the slaughtering statistics to be produced as quickly as possible so that the data is still relevant. For this reason, we collect and publish these statistics to a very tight timetable, publishing within three weeks of the survey date. The “Market Intelligence” and “Market Outlook” Reports on the EBLEX website refer consistently to our statistics at <http://markets.eblex.org.uk/markets/market-intelligence-publications.aspx>. The BPEX site provides more in-depth analysis of pigmeat production statistics at <http://www.bpex.org.uk/prices-facts-figures/production/UKpigmeatsuppliesforecasts.aspx>
3. Contact details are available on the front page of this notice, for you to send feedback or ask questions about the information provided.

Methodology

4. Defra runs a monthly survey of registered England and Wales slaughterhouses. It is a statutory survey (approximately 97) that collects information on livestock slaughter numbers and weight of meat produced. All major slaughterhouses participate in the survey and the response rate is typically 100%. Similar surveys are run by RERAD in Scotland and by DARD in Northern Ireland. Scottish statistics on livestock slaughterings are available in the Economic Report on Scottish Agriculture at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Agriculture-Fisheries/PubEconomicReport> (Tables A5 and A6). This website also contains contact details and more information. Northern Ireland results are available at <http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/statistics/agricultural-inputs-and-outputs.htm>
5. The England and Wales slaughter survey accounts for around 90% of the E&W slaughterhouse throughput for each livestock type. These data are supplemented by administrative data for smaller slaughterhouses to give complete monthly coverage of livestock slaughterings.
6. Information on the weight of meat produced from a sample of animals weighed at slaughterhouses is obtained from survey respondents, around 55 slaughterhouse

respondents. From the information provided average dressed carcass weights for each animal type are primarily calculated by adding up the total weight of the meat produced and dividing by the number of animals weighed. Cold dressed carcass weights are recorded.

7. The volume of meat production is estimated from the number of all livestock slaughtered and average dressed carcass weight information collected. This total 'Home killed' production includes livestock imported into the United Kingdom for slaughter.
8. The data are subject to a variety of validation checks which identify inconsistencies in the data. All data are cleaned prior to publication in discussion with the survey respondents.

Definitions

9. To align with EU regulatory requirements, the definition of calves has been changed in this survey from May 2014 onwards to refer to age of animals, rather than weight. The new definition of calves is "bovines aged 12 months or under", whereas previous data (pre-May 2014) referred to "bovines weighing less than 165kg". This change in definition has had negligible impact to both the numbers of slaughterings and the volumes of production as the levels of UK calf slaughterings are so small. Veal production only contributes around 0.7% (470 tonnes) to the total 68 thousand tonnes of beef and veal produced in May 2014. This compares to 0.4% (280 tonnes) in May 2013.
The main difference can be seen in the calf weights as they have jumped up from an average 52kg in April 2014 to 67kg in May 2014. This is due to extra (heavier) animals which are less than a year old so which now fall into the calf category.

10. Steers (or Bullocks): Castrated males over 1 year old, raised for beef.

Heifers: Female animals that have not calved. Over 1 year old, raised for beef.

Young bulls: Non-castrated young males, raised for beef, generally slaughtered around 13 months old.

Prime cattle: All those raised specifically for beef production. Total of Steers + Heifers + Young Bulls.

Breeding bulls: Older cull males, previously used for breeding

Cows: Older cull females, previously used for breeding

Calves: All bovine animals aged 1 year old or younger. Prior to May 2014, the definition was "animals weighing less than 165kg" but this has been amended in line with EU Regulation 1165/2008 definitions. See "Revisions" section for details of the impact of this change.

Revisions policy

11. Figures in this notice are provisional and subject to revision. We will provide information about any revisions we make to previously published information in this

statistics notice and the associated datasets. Revisions could occur for various reasons, including:

- a. if we have not received survey data from respondents we make an estimate based on their previous returns. These estimates will be replaced with actual survey data when it is received.
- b. survey respondents occasionally supply amended figures for previous periods.
- c. if we have not received administrative data for the smaller slaughterhouses we make an estimate based on previous data received. These estimates will be replaced with actual data when it is received.

12. The change in Calves definition in May 2014 (from <165kg to 1 year old or younger) has had negligible impact to both the numbers of slaughterings and the volumes of production as the levels of UK calf slaughterings are so small. Veal production only contributes around 0.7% (470 tonnes) to the total 68 thousand tonnes of beef and veal produced in May 2014. This compares to 0.4% (280 tonnes) in May 2013. The main difference can be seen in the calf weights as they have jumped up from an average 52kg in April 2014 to 67kg in May 2014. This is due to extra (heavier) animals which are less than a year old so which now fall into the calf category.

13. **This month minor revisions have been made to the data to October and November data 2014. Revised estimates have now been received for these months from Scotland. Amended survey data has also been received. The scale of revision is small, for example November 2014 UK Mutton and Lamb production has been revised by around 38 tonnes (- 0.1%).**